Thousands throng Sann to celebrate G.M. Syed's 122nd birth anniversary

TTAP leaders attend programme, warn rulers against pushing country towards instability

By Qurban Ali Khushik

DADU: Several thousand activists of various Sindhi nationalist parties and their factions gathered in Sann town of Jamshoro district on Saturday to celebrate the 122nd birth anniversary of veteran nationalist leader G.M. Syed.

While the main ceremony was organised by the Sindh United Party (SUP) close to the residence of its founder, Syed Jalal Mahmood Shah, other gatherings were held by Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz-Bashir (JSQM-B), its several factions, Jeay Sindh Mahaz-Riaz (JSM-R) and other entities near the grave of G.M. Syed.

The celebrations kicked off in the morning with large groups of activists of nationalist parties and followers of the late Syed arriving in Sann from across the province.

Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai, addressing the SUP gathering said that Pakistan has neither remained a truly Islamic country nor a democratic state. He warning that continued denial of democratic rights to citizens was pushing the country towards chaos, conflicts and instability.

He said that the people of Pakistan were demanding their rightful share in governance. "All state institutions must operate within their constitutional limits to ensure a stable and democratic Pakistan," he stressed.

He said that any government that fails to provide basic amenities, including food, clothing and shelter, to its citizens has no moral right to rule over them.

He cautioned the rulers against turning the country into a battleground amid growing global power rivalries.

He said that the ongoing conflict of interest among the United States, China and Russia should not be allowed to suck in Pakistan. "We don't want our homeland to become a battlefield," he added.

Criticising the recent constitutional amendments, Achakzai said that the 26th and 27th Amendments had "strangled Pakistan" undermining democratic values and weakening the federation. He reiterated that only restoration of a genuine democracy and constitutional supremacy could ensure stability and peace in the country.

SUP president Syed Zain Shah called for collective efforts to reform the country's political system through constitutional means. He announced that a complete wheeljam and shutterdown strike would be observed on February 8. He rejected "political deals for power" and also opposed any attempt to dismantle historical homelands into administrative units. He said speakers of different languages in Sindh stood united against "centralised control influenced by foreign powers".

TTAP General Secretary Asad Qaiser said that public mandate was stolen on February 8, not only from Imran Khan but from the people of Pakistan. He alleged that recent legislations were designed to benefit the establishment, and urged traders and transporters to support the Feb 8 strike for the protection of people's constitutional rights. He reiterated the demand for restoration of the 1973 Constitution in its original form.

Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said that there could be no justice without rule of law, adding that constitutional amendments were made out of fear by the rulers.

The gathering unanimously adopted several resolutions in support of the demands.

They claimed that police had put up barricades all along the routes of the venue and subjected them to frisking, checking and harassment.

The main gathering was to be addressed by SUP leader Syed Zain Shah and his senior party colleagues late in the evening.

FOLLOWERS of G.M. Syed attend the programme to celebrate his 122nd birth anniversary held in Sann on Saturday.—Dawn

At a separate gathering, JSM-R chief and Chairman of the Jeay Sindh Rahbar Committee Riaz Ali Chandio told his supporters that people managed to reach the venue despite harassments through raids and road blockades, which he described as 'state repression'.

Chandio accused the Centre of denying Sindh its constitutional rights and autonomy for decades. He alleged that Sindh's water, gas, oil, coal, land and other resources were being taken away. He said that policies of the federal and Sindh governments were undermining environment and increasing poverty, diseases and unemployment in the province.

He said the diversion of the Indus routes and flows had caused considerable damage to the agriculture sector and ecosystem.

He alleged that the oil and gas deposits being explored in Sindh were being taken away while locals remained deprived of their own resources.

He also criticised land acquisition for corporate farming and housing projects as well as Centre's control over coastal areas, saying that all this was leading to the displacement of local communities and creating a potential threat to Sindh's cultural and natural heritage, including mountains and lakes.

Condemning the worsening law and order situation across the province, Chandio observed an increase in the incidents of extrajudicial killings and other police excesses. He said that the health, education and irrigation sectors were collapsing. He also criticised the mainstream political parties for their failure to protect Sindh's rights.

He announced that the Rahbar Committee would hold province-wide protests on January 20 against the raids and restrictions resorted to by police to sabotage G.M. Syed's anniversary celebration.

He said his party would continue its peaceful struggle for Sindh's survival.

Road blockades

The celebrations were marred by police who erected barricades on various roads leading to Sann town.

According to Sindh United Party (SUP) spokesperson Naveed Khawaja, party president Syed Zain Shah and his convoy of workers opted to travel via the Indus River after road blockades were put up by the police.

Zain Shah and party workers boarded boats from Nawabshah and proceeded to Sann, waving party flags and raising slogans, celebrating what they described as a breakthrough against restrictions on their movement.

The spokesperson said that the convoy reached the riverside residence in Sann, where the anniversary events were scheduled to take place.

Caravans of nationalist party leaders and workers arrived from various districts to participate in commemorative events.

The main public gathering was held in Sann under the leadership of the SUP, while other nationalist groups organised separate rallies and meetings to mark the occasion.

Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz-Bashir group led by Sanan Qureshi, JSM led by Riaz Chandio, and JST held separate programmes in Sann.

Activists of the banned Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) also arrived in Sann and visited G.M. Syed's grave.

As part of the celebrations, a birthday cake was cut at the SUP gathering, and party leaders and activists paid homage to the deceased leader.

In view of the situation, the district administration imposed Section 144 and deployed a heavy contingent of police at key locations to maintain law and order.

A torch-bearing rally was taken out by the SUP in Sann late at night, which passed through several neighbourhoods before concluding at G.M. Syed's mausoleum. Participants carrying torches laid flowers on the grave and paid rich tribute.

Speaking to the media in two separate occasions in Sann, Syed Munir Hyder Shah and Dr Niaz Kalanai urged activists to stage peaceful demonstrations wherever police attempted to stop them from reaching the town.

A delegation of Tehreek-i-Tahaffuz-i-Aeen Pakistan faced multiple hurdles while travelling from Karachi to Sann.

In a video message, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) General Secretary Dr Masroor Sial strongly condemned the government's actions, questioning whether speaking about the Constitution had now become a crime.

He said that obstructing a peaceful and constitutional movement reflected intolerance toward democratic voices and raised concerns about the state of democratic freedoms.

Dr Sial emphasised that the delegation was exercising its constitutional right to political activity and vowed that such measures would not deter efforts for the protection of the Constitution.

TTAP leaders Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Allama Nasir Abbas, Asad Qaiser, Zain Shah and others cut a cake at the main programme.—Dawn

Jeay Sindh slogan has never lost its charm, but movement fading away

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

SANN (Jamshoro): It was a sparkling sunny morning, typical of winter season, with clear blue skies on Saturday. Sann, a small town of Sindh's Jamshoro district, located on the right bank of the Indus River, wore a festive look as large groups of people, mostly activists of various Sindhi nationalist entities, were walking towards the town's graveyard.

One such group was present at the grave of veteran Sindhi nationalist leader G.M. Syed.

Placing their right hand on the marbled grave, they recited poetry of Shaikh Ayaz, *Sindhhudesh ji dharti tou tey ....pahnjo sees nivaya*.

"He is our political prophet. I visit him out of *Ishq*", says Muzamil Katyar, a young man from Tando Allahyar district. "Syed spent 40 years of his life in jail for Sindh," he remarks while attending Syed's 122nd birth anniversary in Sann.

If charismatic Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and iconic Benazir Bhutto rule the hearts and minds of people from their mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bux, G.M. Syed keeps influencing his followers across Sindh. For them, Saen G.M. Syed means a lot whenever it comes to struggle for restitution of Sindh's rights.

Regardless of multiple factions having divided the nationalist parties inspired by Syed's ideology, the slogan of *Jeay Sindh* has never lost its charm for them.

G.M. Syed, considered to be the pioneer of modern Sindhi nationalism, had died in detention at a hospital in April 1995. He remained incarcerated for around 31 years without facing any charges, though he was dubbed as 'secessionist' by the country's rulers. His Jeay Sindh Movement (JSM) faced splits after split with some factions adopting violent means as well. Many of Syed's followers have fallen prey to prolonged or unending detention and many others are still unaccounted for. Some of them are dubbed as 'proxies of external forces'.

"To me, the Sindhudesh movement has lost its vigour, but the slogan is influencing the minds," says Syed Zain Shah, G.M. Syed's paternal grandson while alluding to factionalism in the JSM.

While Syed shunned politics in 70s within Pakistan's framework after propounding the 'Sindhudesh' concept, parliamentary politics returned to his family in the late 90s soon after his death in 1995.

Zain's elder brother Syed Jalal Mehmood Shah won a seat of the Sindh Assembly in 1997 and eventually became its deputy speaker. Now ailing, Jalal Shah had in 2006 founded his Sindh United Party (SUP) which Zain Shah actively heads as president.

He pursues parliamentary politics, though in opposition, which rejects the Feb 8, 2024 general election results and the parliament emerging out of it.

The Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) founded by G.M. Syed kept facing fragmentation.

The Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, founded by Bashir Qureshi, is one of the at least eight factions and actively follows Syed's ideology of Sindhudesh. Another faction is the proscribed Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM) which is led by Shafi Burfat from abroad. There also exist militant factions like the Sindhudesh Liberation Army (SLA) and Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA).

Abdul Khaliq Junejo heads his own Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) and runs a peaceful campaign for Sindhis' right to self-determination.

He agrees that Sindh's nationalist movement has lost the elements of its character and ideology. "Resonance of Syed's philosophy, nonetheless, remains as strong as ever. It is evident from the fact that even federalist and religious parties have to essentially talk about protecting Sindh's interests or rights," Junejo asserts.

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Threat of terrorism persists in country, says Murad

By Our Correspondent

DADU: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that terrorists are once again trying to harm the country in every possible way.

Speaking to the media in his ancestral village, Wahar, in Sehwan taluka on Saturday, he recalled that a big terror plot was foiled in Karachi a couple of weeks ago when explosive material was recovered.

The chief minister warned that threats of terrorism still persist in the country, and stressed that

terrorism must be defeated through collective efforts in coordination with relevant state institutions.

Talking about the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, he said that it has been constituted and consultations among stakeholders are underway. He noted that different provinces have presented their proposals. The stance of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is clear that the provinces' share should not be curtailed and that all provinces must be given their rightful shares, he said, and added that the Federal Board of Revenue should help boost the country's exports. "The PPP will support any decision that is in the best interest of the country," he said.

Referring to the arrangements for the annual *Urs* of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, the chief minister said that he is personally supervising the arrangements and that all possible facilities will be provided to devotees.

During his stay in Wahur, CM Shah attended a gathering held to observe the death anniversary of his mother. He visited his mother's grave, showered rose petals on it and offered Fateha.

A Quran Khwani was held which was followed by a *langar* (free meal) for the mourners. Former Pakistan Peoples Party MNA Sardar Sikandar Ali Rahpoto and a large number of party activists and people from all walks of life attended the gathering.